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Efforts by Glenview officials and U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th, to reduce the military housing the Navy plans to have a private developer rebuild locally have been rewarded.

Fears that the number of units planned for Glenview would crowd classrooms and strain school budgets were eased Tuesday, when the Navy and Forest City Military Communities LLC, its private partner, announced details of their plans.

The public-private venture is intended to replace most of the aging housing for enlisted personnel training for the Navy's surface fleet at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center.

Through demolition, renovation and new construction, 1,524 residences are to be provided -- 250 in Glenview, 284 at Fort Sheridan and 966 in North Chicago.

"Glenview is very appreciative of the efforts of Congressman Kirk and his ability to get the reduction of housing in Glenview. That lessens the impact to our schools, and that is a very positive move," Village President Kerry Cummings said Tuesday.

Currently, there are 400 units at the former Glenview Naval Air Station, although many are unoccupied because of their poor condition.

Plans put forward in April by the Navy and Forest City called for keeping 112 two-bedroom units, rebuilding 288 units and adding 16 more, bringing the total to 416 units for the entire 93-acre Glenview site.

Land to be sold

The larger number of housing units wasn't the only negative for Glenview officials. Absent from the spring plan was an earlier promise to return about 38 acres of the former base land to the property tax rolls by selling it for private development.

Glenview officials said they feel better about the plans for 250 total units and the sale of more than 30 acres announced Tuesday -- plans called "very solid" by Mike Defferding, Forest City's executive vice president of military housing.

"The village believe it's a good compromise, and it's also a positive development for our school districts in terms of mitigating the net number of new students that will be brought into the schools," Village Manager Todd Hileman said Tuesday.

About 160 children of military families attended Glenview School District 34 in 2004-05. School officials Tuesday predicted about 100 more students would be expected to attend after the new housing is in place.

"While this news comes at a time when we are already growing and strapped for space, that figure is better news than the 150 to 200 new students that were projected under previous plans," District 34 Superintendent Gerald Hill said.

Defferding said Tuesday on-going negotiations with Kirk and Glenview officials since April, and a reassessment by the Navy that reduced the total number of required housing units from 1,855 to 1,542, "came together to allow us to have a plan that ... people are getting very comfortable with."

The Glenview site is being surveyed, and Defferding expects a little more than 30 acres, primarily to the west of the National 9 Golf Course, would be available for sale.

Sale proceeds would help the Navy finance construction.

To whom the land will be sold will primarily be up to Forest City, as the managing member of the venture, and the Secretary of the Navy, who was given Congressional authority to buy and sell federal real estate in 1996, Defferding said.

Said Kirk, "Civilian development does generate more money for schools, but that's a decision I'm not going to be involved in."

New tax revenue

The Navy would retain ownership of the tax-free sites of the military housing, but the structures built and leased by Forest City would be subject to local property taxes.

By Kirk's latest estimates, Glenview taxing bodies would see \$758,000 in new tax revenue annually from that arrangement.

The next milestone for the project is expected to occur in early October, when Forest City and the Navy are expected to sign a formal partnership agreement that sets the financial aspects of the project in motion.

Cambridge Homes, which built 108 townhouses and 108 single-family homes in The Glen, has been selected to build the military housing project.

Northbrook-based Red Seal Development Corp. has been picked to renovate historic structures at Great Lakes.

Wheeling-based Kenny Construction Co. was selected to build the roads, lay water and sewer pipes and provide other infrastructure.

Defferding said the new military housing will most benefit military families, who have been living in a neighborhood that "got left behind.

"This program allows us to catch up and correct that problem" of inadequate housing, he said, adding "Once these new homes are built and landscaped, this will be a major plus to improving Glenview."